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COVER: Icon of Blessed Father Herman of Alaska; see p. 202. The color icon may be obtained from the Brotherhood for 25 cents (10 cents to residents of Alaska). Photographs on pp. 215-225, courtesy of Gene Sundberg and Roger Page of Kodiak, Alaska.

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FROM THIS DAY, FROM THIS HOUR,
FROM THIS MINUTE LET US STRIVE TO LOVE GOD
ABOVE ALL, AND FULFILL HIS HOLY WILL.

Father Herman

IN VIEW of the forthcoming canonization of the Righteous Apostle of Orthodoxy to America, Father Herman, it is timely to remind our readers that a Saint before his canonization is regarded to be especially close to earth, more attentive than ever in his heavenly intercession for those who fervently pray to him.

With this in mind we dedicate this issue of *THE ORTHODOX WORD* to the blessed memory of Father Herman.

The First Icon of FATHER HERMAN

And God is able to make all
grace abound toward you (II Cor. 9: 8)

BEFORE his holy relics on Spruce Island was conceived the inspiration of painting an icon of Blessed Herman in the full Orthodox tradition, showing halo and a scroll with his sayings; Fr. Gerasim blessed the painting of it and in 1962 approved the icon. Later that same year the Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch received the icon into the altar of his church of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, where it was kept for over a year; from there it was transferred to the Father Herman Brotherhood Printshop.

The Saint is depicted against Monk's Lagoon and Spruce Island. The iron cross with chains which he wears are his 15-pound *verigi*. His lifted arm is the traditional iconographic way of depicting apostolic teaching; and the scroll bears his words which appear overleaf.

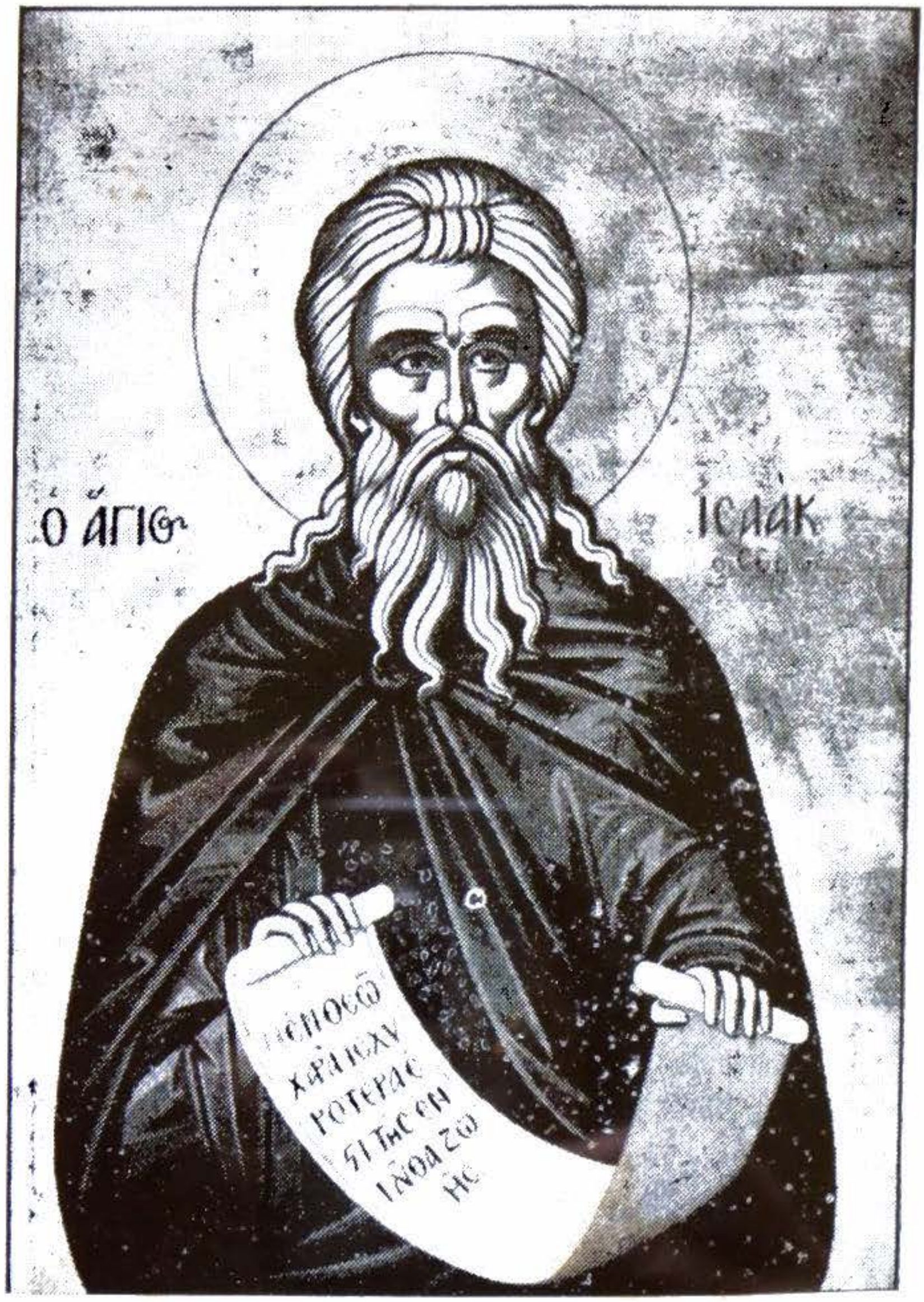
In the history of the Church often the Saints themselves in mysterious ways see to it that they are canonized, showing thereby that they are deemed worthy by God to be intercessors for men in their earthly struggles. Today, when true Orthodoxy is anguished, and the sufferings of the world are apparently at the eve of their catastrophic climax, it is of no small importance that a Saint of universal significance is about to be canonized. For, according to the measure of our love and prayers to the Saints, God is able to shed His unutterable bountiful grace that can quench every thirst and desire!

Let everyone facing this icon lift his heart to God and pray for firmness in true Orthodoxy and the realization of Father Herman's canonization, when throughout the world, wherever Orthodox people have been providentially dispersed, there will thunder out:

Holy Father Herman, pray to God for us!

TROPARION, TONE 4

BLESSED dweller of the northern wilds* and gracious intercessor for the whole world,* teacher of the Orthodox Faith,* good and most wonderful enlightener,* adornment of Alaska and joy of all America,* holy Father Herman,* pray that Christ, the King of glory, may save our souls.*



Gerontos Pachomios, Mt. Athos

SAINT ISAAC THE SYRIAN

Commemorated January 30

KONTAKION, TONE 2

IN PURITY OF SOUL divinely having armed thyself,* and continual prayer having firmly grasped as a spear,* thou didst pierce the legion of demons,* Isaac, our Father,* pray continually for all of us.*

THE FATHERS OF
ORTHODOX MONASTICISM

The Life of

ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN

AND HIS ASCETIC WRITINGS

By Prof. I. M. KONTZEVITCH[1]

SAINT ISAAC, who lived in the sixth century, was by birth a Syrian. His homeland was Nineveh; concerning his parents no information has been preserved. While still a youth Isaac, having left the world and everything worldly, together with his brother entered the lavra of St. Matthew and there received the monastic tonsure. When, however, in this monastery he had perfected himself in asceticism and to a sufficient degree had matured in virtue, the desire was awakened in him for deeper silence and desert dwelling. Therefore, having gone away a great distance from the monastery and settled in a desert cell, he began to lead a completely solitary life, having contact with no one at all.

The brother of St. Isaac, having entered into the direction of the aforementioned lavra, did not cease from mightily persuading and begging him in letters to quit the desert and return to his former monastery. But St. Isaac remained in the desert which he found agreeable. News of the high ascetic labors and spiritual enlightenment of St. Isaac aroused a general desire among the Ninevites to ask him to take upon himself, in the capacity of bishop, the direction of the Church of Nineveh.

St. Isaac acceded to this unanimous summons. But he did not govern for long the Church of his native city. Because the flock soon began to display disobedience to the archpastor whom they themselves had chosen, St. Isaac considered it better to take from himself the burden of episcopal service. A particularly strong and painful impression was left by the following incident, which finally forced him to quit his episcopal see.

1. The brief life of St. Isaac here is translated from the Moscow edition of his *Works* (1893); the rest of the article is Prof. Kontzevitch's.

Once two Chrstians of Nineveh came to the Saint in the episcopal house, and one of them demanded of the other the payment of a debt, while the latter, aknowledging that he was in actual fact a debtor, begged nonetheless to be given a short extension. But the lender replied: "If he refuses to pay me the debt, I will take him right now without fail before a judge." St. Isaac, wishing to incline him to condescension, remarked to him: "If according to the commandment of the holy Gospel we must forgive the debtor his debt, then all the more should you show magnanimity for a single day to one who has promised to pay you his debt." In reply to this the cruel man said the following crude words: "Leave your Gospel out of this!" Then St. Isaac declared: "If they will not submit to the Gospel commandments of the Lord, then what remains for me to do among you here?"

And St. Isaac went off into the mountains, [to Kurdistan, in order to labor in asceticism amongst the anchorites there. Later he settled in the monastery of Rabban Shabur, where he studied the holy Scriptures with such zeal that he lost his sight (Kontzevitch)].

His so elevated teaching often found little response or understanding in the world around him. However, his great respect among some contemporaries is apparent from the fact that he was appealed to in letters, in search for the solution of various perplexities, by the holy ascetic St. Simeon Stylites the Younger, who subsequently practiced asceticism on a pillar of the "Hill of Wonders" near Antioch, from which he received the name "St. Simeon of the Hill of Wonders."

The Ascetic Essays

"The cell of a hesychast is that cleft in the rock where the Lord spoke to Moses."
St. Isaac

THE *ASCETIC ESSAYS* of St. Isaac the Syrian do not present themselves as a systematic work. In them there is no system, sequence, or logical constructions. They are rather a collection of fragments and sketches of spiritual reflections, and besides written under his dictation. They are intended *not for beginners*, but for those advancing in perfection.

Here the subject most of all is the higher stages of the spiritual path. These are notes of extraordinarily clear contemplations and insights. They afford a most abundant material for the monastic inward activity. They are inspired essays on fleeing the world and on spiritual vision. In them "one senses clearly this penetration of the wilderness by the sun, the resounding silence of the monastic cave and the extraordinary realness of the inner spiritual warfare. The swish of the serpent, the rustle of the scorpion, the imperturbably regal flight of the eagle in the expanse of heaven, and the refinement of the attacks of demons, the most subtle net of spiritual and fleshly temptations and the warfare of thoughts in the abyss of one's own heart -- this is what grips the reader of this book" (Archimandrite Cyprian Kern).

St. Isaac knows all his predecessors in the sphere of ascetic writings and makes direct citations from them.

THE TEACHING OF THE ASCETIC ESSAYS

THE HEART. The heart is the center of religious life. In the concept of the "heart" is included the manifestations and functions of the soul, including also the mind.

The mind is one of the senses of the soul, says St. Isaac, while the heart embraces in itself and holds in its power the inner senses.

The mechanism of passion. In the depths of the heart, in unconsciousness, there accumulate sinful habits, preconceived notions, from which the demons evoke an inducement toward sin.

SOTERIOLOGY. The redemption is the healing of sin evoked by compassion toward the creature; more than this, the *Incarnation* is not only a soteriological feature, it is a sign of the immortal love of God toward the world, and therefore God would have *become man* even in the case that Adam had not fallen.

St. Isaac notes three stages of the spiritual path: *repentance*, *purification*, and *perfection* or "fulfillment in love and rapture."

Repentance is a "higher grace," the "door of mercy," the possibility of return. It is a "second grace" (the first being baptism), a "second rebirth from God."

Repentance is not merely a single moment; there should be an *orientation* of repentance. Repentance can never be definitive, for no one is above temptations. For those seeking salvation repentance should be constant, as there is no limit to perfection.

"Repentance is always befitting all, sinners and righteous, who seek salvation. And there is no limit to perfection, so that even the perfection of the perfect themselves is in reality an imperfection. Therefore until one's very death there are no limits for repentance either in time or in deeds."

Both *lamentation* and repentance pave the road to purity of soul, for from lamentation a man comes to purity of soul.

Both *stillness* and repentance are indissolubly bound to each other; stillness seeks *solitude*, and this is the aloneness of the soul before the face of God. "Blessed is he who has withdrawn from the world and its darkness and pays heed to himself alone."

Anchoretism is an inward solitude, a special disposition of the soul, a departure from the world; one must "be renewed" and leave the world -- the *world of passions*, of which it is composed.

"The passions are parts of the continuous course of the world, and where the passions cease, there the world stops in its continuity." "Where the passions cease their coursing, there the world dies." "In short, the world is a fleshly institution and a false wisdom of the flesh."

The *passions* are component parts of the world. The soul by nature is passionless. "The passions are something additional," secondary, alien, unnatural. The soul is drawn into the whirling of the passions, itself enters into them and becomes already "outside its own nature." The passions are already a falling out of one's "pristine state."

The soul is drawn into the world, but it can and must go out of it through ceaseless repentance, which will be for it a return to itself, into its natural condition, and a liberation from the laws of spiritual slavery.

The world binds and enslaves through the senses, through sensory impressions; it is precisely through the sensory faculty that the soul's impurity is in subjection to sensory impressions, which kill the life of the heart. *Impurity is the death of the heart.* Sensory impressions blind the soul's vision, and passions consume its authentic knowledge. Purification is attained through the mastery of the senses.

The world is a deception of the senses. "The natural condition of the soul is knowledge (gnosis) of God's creatures, sensory and mental. Its unnatural condition is the movement of the soul in (people) tossed about by the passions." And that which is accepted by the impassioned senses is an illusion, and the world is a deception of the senses. "And

spiritual knowledge is a sensing of the Divine mysteries hidden in things and their causes."

One must be diverted from everything *transitory* (unnatural) and illusory in things and attain what is *not transitory* in them. To remain in the transitory and illusory calls forth *self-forgetfulness*; therefore finding *oneself*, coming to oneself out of self-forgetfulness, is attained by a departure from the "illusory" world. This is precisely *purification* (*catharsis*).

Having been liberated from the impressions of the world, in *stillness*, the soul becomes purified. "Stillness mortifies the outward senses and resurrects inward movements." And thus in stillness is revealed true knowledge (*gnosis*).

The higher *"mental" revelations*, already without images, above every image, are incommensurate with the understanding: "The objects of the future age have no direct and proper nomenclature. Of them there is possible only a certain *simple* knowledge, (which is) above every word, every element, image, color, outline, and every complex name." "This is that unknowing," says St. Isaac, "of which it is said that it is above knowledge" (direct quotation from St. Dionysius the Areopagite).

TRANSFIGURATION. The soul begins to be transfigured, obtaining an unearthly beauty a hundred times more brilliant than the sun's radiance. And the soul enters "the realm of pure nature" and reigns in the Father's glory. This is already the state of *rapture*. The soul is intoxicated with Divine love. "Thought is in amazement, and the heart in Divine captivity." The path is finished. This is already a "sensing of immortal life" -- and more than that, the realization and revelation of eternal immortality in the very being of man.

KNOWLEDGE. Thus there are various stages of knowledge. The *first stage*, of which we have already spoken, is *fleshly* knowledge, knowledge of the transitory, the unreal. This knowledge is a *false* and dangerous one, accomplished through our *senses*.

The *second stage*. In it the soul and its qualities are known, and likewise the wisdom and providence in the structure and course of things. But all this is still in the sphere of the senses and experiences of the soul.

Then, the *third stage*, which is more elevated. This is a spiritual knowledge of the world that rises above the earthly. "Now it can fly

up to the region of the incorporeal, touch the depths of the intangible sea, present to the mind the divine and wondrous actions of Providence in the nature of sensory and mental beings, and it traces out the spiritual mysteries accessible to thought which is mysterious and simple."

And at the very end, the *fourth*, *highest stage* is divine vision under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is the beginning of perfection; this is already greater than knowledge (*gnosis*). "The ladder to that Kingdom is within you, it is hidden in your soul. Immerse yourself within yourself deeper than sin, and you will find there an ascent by which you can ascend."

FREEDOM. Freedom is the source of good. There can be good only thanks to freedom. It is brought to realization and strengthened through practice and asceticism. But *asceticism is possible only in freedom.* Even God Himself acts on the soul "in the mystery of freedom," and life in the future age is the "fatherland of freedom."

In freedom, however, is included also the danger of falling, namely in the "folly of arbitrary will," since good must always be dependent on freedom of choice. "For the Lord is almighty and stronger than all, and He is always victorious in the mortal body when He goes together with ascetics into battle. And if they are vanquished, it is clear that they are vanquished without Him. This means that by the folly of their arbitrary will they have stripped themselves of God."

The power of God is manifested only through searching and ascetic labor: "this world is a contest and this time is a time of warfare."

PRAYER. The moving power of asceticism is prayer, and from it is born and kindled *love* Prayer, in the definition of St. Isaac, is "every converse performed in secret, and every concern of a good mind for God, and every reflection on the spiritual." It is a *standing before God*, as well in thought as in deed and word.

One must strive for unceasing prayer, which is already a sign of perfection, since constancy in prayer is possible only with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. And the ascetic "has already ascended to the summit of virtues and become a dwelling of the Holy Spirit."

In prayer "the mind's vision is directed to God alone. To Him the mind directs all its movements." Here is the *Theocentrism* of prayer. Thus, prayer is the *Theocentric orientation of the soul.*

DIVINE VISION. "He who concentrates the vision of his mind within himself, beholds in himself the dawn of the Spirit. He who disdains every flight of the mind beholds his Master within his heart." "If you are pure, within you is heaven -- and you will behold within you angels and their light, and with them and in them the Master of angels." This is bound up with purity, with liberation from everything sensory, from predilections toward the visible world. "When the mind is in motion [from earthly influences] it is still in the sphere of the soul," but as soon as the mind enters the spiritual realm, "everything relating to prayer ceases, and there begins a certain divine vision, and the mind prays without prayer."

RAPTURE. "The soul's movements, in their strict immaculacy and purity, become participants in the actions of the Spirit. And one out of many is worthy of this, for it is a mystery of the future condition and life. For the soul is raised up, and nature remains inactive, without any movement or remembrance of the here-below."

This is already "silence of mind," and "silence is a mystery of the future age," the repose of divine vision, a prefiguration of the Kingdom of God. "For the saints in the future age, when their mind will be absorbed in the Spirit, will not pray with supplication, but will be established with amazement in joy-creating glory. Thus it also happens with us. As soon as the mind becomes worthy to sense the future blessedness, it forgets itself and everything here below and has no longer in itself a movement toward anything whatever... And freedom is taken away, and the mind is guided, but does not guide us."

In this divine vision, by the power of the Spirit, there is already revealed the connection and the fullness of times. Already the wondrous aeon of the future is visible in its inexpressible light, and thereby the present earthly life seems all the more wondrous. Thought ascends even to the first creation, when by a sudden command everything was brought from non-existence into existence -- "and everything stood before Him in perfection." There is revealed in vision the fullness of providence. And in this divine vision hope is strengthened; every fear and distrustfulness is dispersed... Every anxiety ceases, every separate desire stops... "And they do not see the difficulties of the path, before them are no hills or streams, sharp places in the road will be smooth for them (Is. 11:4)... Ceaselessly their attention is turned to the bosom of their Father. And hope itself in each instant indicates to them as by a finger the remote

and invisible... and with desire for the remote, as by some fire, the soul is kindled -- and the absent presents itself as already present."

LOVE. At the same time there is kindled love. "The heart burns and is kindled by fire, day and night," and there is given the *gift of tears*. And these are already tears of tender feeling and joy, not lamentation and sorrow, tears of love, "for it is in the nature of love also to call forth tears by remembrance of the beloved." This is a foresensing of the approaching Kingdom of God, a sensing of spiritual peace, "and this is a precise sign that the mind has gone out of this world and sensed that spiritual world."

Only through love is perfection attained. "The sign of those who have attained perfection is this: if they were to be given over ten times in a day to be burned for love of men, they would not be satisfied with this."

Saints also strive to become like God "by the perfection of love for neighbor," and in limitless compassion for every creature. "And what is a heart that has mercy? The kindling of the heart for all creation, for men, birds, animals, demons, and all creatures. In bringing them to mind, in beholding them the eyes are filled with tears out of a great and powerful compassion that embraces the heart. And the heart softens, and it connot bear, or hear, or see any kind of harm, or even the least sorrow, experienced by a creature. And therefore even for dumb creatures, and for enemies of the truth, and for those who cause one harm, it offers supplication every hour, that they be preserved and purified. And even for crawling creatures it prays out of great pity. It is awakened in the heart without measure insofar as one becomes like, in this, to God."

IN MEMORIAM

GUARDIAN OF FATHER HERMAN

ARCHIMANDRITE GERASIM OF SPRUCE ISLAND IN ALASKA

A monk like me, fleeing the glory of men,
will come and live on Spruce Island.
FATHER HERMAN

THE FATHER HERMAN Brotherhood from its beginning has had three spiritual and ideological benefactors who especially prayed and cared for its progress: Archbishop John Maximovitch († 1966), Prof. I. M. Kontzevitch († 1965), and Archimandrite Gerasim Schmaltz, who, on the eve of the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos this year, reposed into a better world, leaving us orphaned.

Long ago, when the Blessed Wonderworker of Alaska called Fr. Gerasim to serve him, Fr. Gerasim eagerly followed his call, only to discover what a lonely and a hard path it was; and seeing how very few cared for a Saint of such great importance, he began to call through the press for the formation of a Brotherhood in the name of Father Herman, that the good name of America's Apostle of Orthodoxy become widely known... But alas! his voice, although eloquent and truthful, was unheard for all these many, many years, until through the prayers of another holy man, Archbishop John Maximovitch, a humble beginning was laid in 1963, to the great joy of Fr. Gerasim, who blessed the brothers with an old metal icon found by him on Spruce Island, which, according to him, might very well have belonged to Father Herman. Giving his blessing, he wrote: "You are doing a good thing organizing a Brotherhood of Saint Herman, Wonderworker of Alaska! May God help you! But keep in mind that Satan does not like such things; he causes evil deeds to those who glorify God's chosen righteous people. I experienced myself the same thing upon my arrival in Alaska... I greet all brothers. May God and His Most Pure Mother protect you."

Fr. Gerasim's constant prayers for us at the grave and relics of the Saint have been a living bond linking the Brotherhood to Blessed Father Herman. Therefore it is our duty, using his abundant correspondence to us, to speak the truth about Fr. Gerasim, sketching a brief, honest portrait of him and for the first time putting into proper perspective Fr. Gerasim's significance, which indeed constitutes a whole chapter in the *Life* of St. Herman.

FR. GERASIM was born on October 28, 1888 in the town of Alexin, Tula province, of pious Orthodox Russian parents, Alexander and Natalia. At baptism he was given the name Michael. From early childhood he was brought up on the Lives of Saints, in a strict patriarchal church consciousness. Until his fifteenth year, although he had drunk in deeply the monastic spirit, he had not once been to a monastery. Here is how he describes his first visit to a monastery, from which is well evident the spiritual orientation which did not leave him to his death, and which guided his entire life in the correct, canonical path.

"When I was fifteen years old, I came with Mother to the city of Tula, where I was to be sent to school. We stayed at the home of Mother's brother, my Uncle Nikolai Ivanovich Petrov, who then was living not far from [Shcheglov] monastery... Strolling alone near Uncle's home, I longed with tears for my green forest back home, where I so loved to wander off and where I recalled all the great ascetics -- monks who lived saving their souls in dense forests in the bosom of nature... Once we were drinking tea at Uncle's in the garden and from this garden I saw golden crosses shining at sunset on dark blue domes, visible from behind the green trees. My heart leapt with joy when I heard that a holy place, for which my soul had longed since childhood, was so close.

"On the next day, early in the morning, we went to the monastery. The weather was wonderful; the sun shone brightly from behind the birch grove that surrounded the monastery. At the gates of the holy monastery sat a monk, an old man, and I at once guessed that this was the "gatekeeper," since I had already read many books on monasteries and the Lives of the Holy Fathers... I wanted to see Starets Dometian and to open my soul to him and ask his blessing to leave the world for good and settle in the hermitage." He did not see the Starets then, but "in January, 1906, I traveled to the Starets for his blessing to enter the monastery. The Starets received me kindly and asked who I was and where I was from. Having listened to me he replied: 'The Lord Himself will show you your path.' I wanted then to stay in Shcheglov, but the Starets again told me: 'Your path is a different one. The Lord Himself

ARCHIMANDRITE GERASIM
Summer, 1967

Hieromonk Gerasim in 1916

will show you.' In the same year, July 17, 1906, I entered the Hermitage of St. Tikhon in Kaluga province."[1]

The Monastery of St. Tikhon, with 200 monks, some of them great ascetics, was not far from Optina. Fr. Gerasim recalled: "Optina and its Startsi were well known to me from childhood." He was entrusted to the holy Starets Ioasaph and given an obedience in the infirmary. There he received a sound monastic foundation, and his understanding of monasticism remained to the end of his life genuine, firm and sober. Later, on Spruce Island, he could have laid a firm foundation for a monastery if it had not been for the schism of the American Metropolia; this took all his energy and left him isolated.

In 1911 Fr. Gerasim fulfilled his childhood dream and went to Mt. Athos, intending to stay; but soon his mother's illness brought him back to Russia, to Tula, where he joined Bishop Evdokim, with whom he came to America in 1915 as a missionary. The same year he was ordained hieromonk and in 1916 he was assigned to Alaska, traveling there with Bishop Philip. He went first to Sitka, then to Kodiak, and finally was assigned as a village priest in Afognak, where he spent 18 years.

When the Revolution of 1917 broke out in Russia, Fr. Gerasim saw a dream: "The whole sky was dark, fearful. But in the midst of it there was light, and there was Christ crucified. He was dying, His head was bent down and the muscles on His arms trembled from suffering. And I heard a voice: 'Pray, Russia is crucified.' And soon we in Alaska heard of the fierce persecution of Christian believers and the destruction of holy places," including his beloved St. Tikhon's Monastery, where the monks were arrested and his Starets Ioasaph left to die from hunger.

Outside of Russia, all the free bishops formed a Synod of the Russian Church Abroad, which appointed Metropolitan Platon of Odessa to America. He, however, showed disobedience in America and first turned to Moscow, then proclaimed an uncanonical independent American

1. From an article in Archbishop Vitaly's periodical *Orthodox Carpathian Russia*, 1934. All quotations that follow, unless otherwise noted, are taken from Fr. Gerasim's letters to the Brotherhood.

Church with himself as its head. To the horror of Fr. Gerasim, almost all clergy in America accepted this unlawful act. When, finally, one vicar Bishop, Apollinary, raised his voice in protest, he was immediately deposed by Metr. Platon and literally evicted from his living quarters.

All of Orthodox Alaska blindly followed the schism, except for Fr. Gerasim. And now he remembered Blessed Father Herman: "Finally, after I had lived ten years in Alaska, God granted me to visit Spruce Island and the grave of the marvelous Elder. That day I shall never forget! The weather was wonderful, the sun was brightly shining, the birds were singing joyfully. I fell on my knees and said: 'Father Herman, Christ is risen!' And at that moment I was surrounded by such a fragrance as I had never before smelled! It was a paradisal fragrance; the Elder's soul visited then his beloved wilderness! This I believe. I said: 'Father Herman, if there should come a time when I will be able to come here to you to stay -- accept me!'" He left the island reassured of where to turn for sure support.

"When I received an ukase from the Synod of Bishops Outside of Russia, in which I read that Metr. Platon had been forbidden to serve by the Sobor of Russian Bishops and had been removed from the North American Diocese -- for three whole days, under the impression of this news, I couldn't even sleep, thinking, Where is the truth, and whom should I obey now, Metr. Platon and his vicars, or the Sobor of Russian Bishops (in Serbia)? On the day of the feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, I fervently prayed to God and begged Him to show me where the truth was and whom to obey... I wrote on two pieces of paper, on one 'Sobor of Bishops,' and on the other 'Metr. Platon'; I placed both papers on the holy Altar Table and begged God by this lot to show me after the singing of 'To Thee we sing' [at the moment of the consecration during the Liturgy]. And then I took the first paper and read: 'Sobor of Bishops.' I believe that by this the Lord showed me that one must submit to the Sobor of Bishops."[1]

After this Fr. Gerasim unfailingly commemorated the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia: Metropolitans Anthony, Anastasy, and later Philaret. Soon he received and gave for publication a reply from Mt. Athos to his request for confirmation of his stand, from Archimandrite Misail and the brethren of the St. Panteleimon's Russian Monastery: "You have acted well and rightly... Truly you should commemorate at Divine services *not* Metr. Platon, but Bishop *Apollinary*, *as having canonically accepted authority from the Synod of Bishops*, by whom

1. From the Harbin (Manchuria) Church periodical *Khleb Nebesny*, 1927, no. 14, p. 15.

Metr. Platon, who formerly acknowledged this Synod and then separated from it, was *canonically* deposed."

This "disobedience," of course, caused great displeasure on the part of the local clergy. But Fr. Gerasim, confirmed by God for preferring truth above all, made the final decision to leave his parish altogether and seek refuge on Father Herman's island.

"In 1935, at the end of August, at the time when the 'Platonites' had maliciously armed themselves against me and tried with the aid of the police not to allow me on Spruce Island, I saw a dream in Afognak: It is as if I am somewhere around a high mountain. A beautiful place. All around spruce trees are growing, and green grass. And I hear the pealing of a bell and think: probably there is a monastery here, I'll go and look. I go and see that among some young spruce trees stands a monk short in stature and kindly says to me: 'It is I who am here ringing the Easter bells,' and he consoled me and told me who it was who was against me. I awoke, and joy visited my soul. I said: 'Father Herman is for me, I don't fear anyone.' And on August 26, I moved to the island."

And thus Fr. Gerasim abandoned everything, and taking his abbot's staff went to guard the Saint's premises, becoming the one guiding light of 20th-century Orthodox Alaska. And the Saint, looking down from above, blessed this fearless witnessing of the truth and made his prophecy be fulfilled upon Fr. Gerasim, who bore the same name as Father Herman's beloved disciple.[1]

Fr. Gerasim repaired the chapel over the Saint's grave, built another on the site of Father Herman's old cell, and he was even deemed worthy to uncover the relics of the Saint. "If I hadn't moved to Spruce Island in 1935, there would be nothing but ruins there now."

In the '30's there were unsuccessful attempts to build a monastery on Spruce Island by bishops who knew nothing of monasticism; one of them had never even heard of St. Seraphim of Sarov until Fr. Gerasim told him of this Saint, for whom he had a particular devotion. They even tried to drive Fr. Gerasim off the island, and the natives of Kodiak then collected 250 signatures on a petition to allow him to stay.

Fr. Gerasim was adamant whenever the question arose of moving the Saint's relics away from Alaska. "I have heard that they are dreaming of taking away Father Herman's relics to New York... That would be only blasphemy!! Father Herman belongs to Orthodox Alaska; he lived here for over forty years, and his place is the Spruce Island Hermitage."

1. See F. A. Golder, *Father Herman, Alaska's Saint*, San Francisco, 1968, pp. 39-42.

(*Continued on p.* 223)

A Treasury of Father Herman's Spirituality

A first compilation of Father Herman's teachings on spiritual life drawn from his letters and conversations.

I

THE WAY OF A CHRISTIAN

WITHOUT EXALTING myself to the rank of teacher, nonetheless, fulfilling my duty and obligation as an obedient servant for the benefit of my neighbor, I will speak my mind, founded on the commandments of Holy Scripture, to those who thirst and seek for their eternal heavenly homeland.

A true Christian is made by faith and love toward Christ. Our sins do not in the least hinder our Christianity, according to the word of the Saviour Himself. He deigned to say: not the righteous have I come to call, but sinners to salvation; there is more joy in heaven over one who repents than over ninety righteous ones. Likewise concerning the sinful woman who touched His feet, He deigned to say to the Pharisee Simon: to one who has love, a great debt is forgiven, but from one who has no love, even a small debt will be demanded. From these judgements a Christian should bring himself to hope and joy, and not in the least accept an inflicted despair. Here one needs the shield of faith.

Sin, to one who loves God, is nothing other than an arrow from the enemy in battle. The true Christian is a warrior fighting his way through the regiments of the unseen enemy to his heavenly homeland. According to the word of the Apostle, our homeland is in heaven; and about the warrior he says: our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, [against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spirits of wickedness under heaven (Eph.6: 12)].

The vain desires of this world separate us from our homeland; love of them and habit clothe our soul as if in a hideous garment. This is called by the Apostles the outward man. We, traveling on the journey of this life and calling on God to help us, ought to be divesting ourselves of this hideous garment and clothing ourselves in new desires, in a new love of the age to come, and thereby to receive knowledge of how near or how far we are from our heavenly homeland. But it is not possible to do this quickly; rather one must follow the example of sick people, who, wishing the desired [health], do not leave off seeking means to cure themselves.

(*From a Letter of June 20, 1820*)

II

LOVE OF GOD

ONCE THE ELDER was invited on board a frigate that had come from St. Petersburg. The captain of the frigate was a man quite learned, highly educated; he had been sent to America by Imperial command to inspect all the colonies. With the captain were some 25 officers, likewise educated men. In this company there sat a desert-dwelling monk of small stature, in an old garment, who by his wise conversation brought all his listeners to such a state that they did not know how to answer him. The captain himself related: "We were speechless, fools before him!"

Father Herman gave them all one common question: "What do you, gentlemen, love above all, and what would each of you wish for his happiness?" Diverse answers came out. One desired wealth, one glory, one a beautiful wife, one a fine ship which he should command, and so on in this fashion. "Is it not true," said Father Herman at this, that all your various desires can be reduced to one -- that each of you desires that which, in his understanding, he considers best and most worthy of love?" "Yes, it is so," they all replied. "Well, then, tell me," he continued, "can there be anything better, higher above everything, more surpassing everything and in general more worthy of love, than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who created us, adorned with such perfections, gave life to all, supports all, nourishes and loves all, Who Himself is love and more excellent than all men? Should one not therefore high

above all love God, and more than all desire and seek Him?" All began to say: "Well, yes! That is understood!" "That speaks for itself!"

"And do you love God?" the Elder then asked. All replied: "Of course, we love God. How can one not love God?" "And I, sinful one, for more than forty years have been striving to love God, and cannot say that I perfectly love Him," answered Father Herman; and he began to show how one should love God. "If we love someone," he said, "we always think of him, strive to please him, day and night our heart is occupied with this subject. Is it thus that you, gentlemen, love God? Do you often turn to Him, do you always think of Him, do you always pray to Him and fulfill His holy commandments?" It had to be acknowledged that they did not! "For our good, for our happiness," concluded the Elder, "at least let us make a promise to ourselves, that from this day, from this hour, from this minute we shall strive to love God above all, and fulfill His holy will!" Behold what an intelligent, superb conversation Father Herman conducted in society; without doubt this conversation must have imprinted itself on the hearts of his listeners for their whole life!

(*Yanovsky, in* Life of Monk Herman of Valaam, *1868*)

III

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT has a power to awaken us to the realization of the existence of various calamities and dangers surrounding us, from which the Providence of God preserves us. At the same time it convincingly persuades us to acknowledge our own infirmity and weakness and to seek the Father's protection and His most powerful defense, which affirms us in the Wisdom and the Word of God, Which came down from above by the will of the Heavenly Father under a curtain of flesh like ours, woven by the Divine Might from the Most Pure Virgin, for our salvation. He became man and deigned to teach us to pray that we be not led into temptation. This reminds us from what Father we have our existence, and this in turn should make us seek our heavenly fatherland and our eternal inheritance.

(*From a Letter to Baranoff, 1809*)

IV

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE

NOT AMIDST THE STORMY waves of the sea are we tossed, but within the seductive and much-agitated world, suffering and wandering according to the Apostle's word. Although we do not have such Grace as the Apostles had, still our wrestling is against the same fleshless principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spirits of evil under heaven, who strive to intercept and hold and prevent all travelers toward our heavenly fatherland; for, according to the word of St. Peter, our adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5: 8); wherefore we weak and infirm ones most certainly have need to seek help from each other's prayers.

(*From a Letter of December 13, 1819*)

The Elder was occupied in his cell with handiwork, when suddenly his disciple Gerasim came to the cell and did not say the usual prayer ["By the prayers of our holy Fathers, O Lord God, have mercy on us"] at the door. Entering the cell, he said: "Bless me, Father." The Elder answered nothing; the disciple repeated his request several times, but the Elder did not answer. The disciple stood for several hours and finally decided to leave the cell. Coming again the next day, he said the usual prayer; the Elder answered: "Amen." The disciple said: "Bless me, Father"; the Elder blessed him and sat down at his work. Then the disciple asked him: "Father, why did you not bless me and answer when I asked you yesterday?" To this the Elder replied: "When I came to this [Spruce] island, many times demons would come to me in my cell, sometimes in the form of a man for some necessities, and sometimes in the form of a beast, and did many fearful and evil things to me; this is the reason why I do not receive anyone in my cell without the prayer."

(*Notes of Lazarev, October, 1864*)

(*Continued from p. 218*)

After the lamentable Cleveland Sobor of 1946, Fr. Gerasim suffered again a great deal, but now it was different. He had no parish and so was not obliged to consider himself in the Metropolia. Besides, the Synod of Bishops did not this time, as in 1927, proclaim an official condemnation of the Metropolia, apparently viewing its schism as not yet final. But if the Metropolia considered him its own, Fr. Gerasim left no doubt as to where he thought himself to be. "In their malice, the 'Leontyites' have armed themselves against the canonization of our luminary, the holy Righteous Father John of Kronstadt. They are all 'Platonites.' Do such ones *need* the canonization of a Saint of God?" But the Synodal bishops are "our great hierarch, the unforgettable Abba Vladika Metropolitan Anthony" (Khrapovitsky), "Archbishop Vitaly, a true monk," "the righteous hierarch Tikhon" (of San Francisco), "our Vladika Bishops Sava and Averky" and Vladika John Maximovitch, "who had a blessed death." After Fr. Gerasim's death, his close friend for many years, Gene Sundberg, wrote: "In all the years I have known Fr. Gerasim, I've known that he was a member of another part of the Russian Church, other than the Kodiak Church, that is. As I understand, the Russian Church in Exile."

Thus did Fr. Gerasim come to the end of a life of much tribulation and sorrow. "Yes, I had to suffer here persecution, slander, and insults, but not from Communists, not from American unbelievers, no, but from 'humble' bishops and my own brethren. And here I have been working in Alaska for 49 years. And all these years have been lived by me in strict poverty, in cold. And for these long years I did not have a warm nook. But, of course, I know what our great martyr, the Russian people, is suffering, and I pray for it and suffer all. Indeed, I did not seek in America either a good parish or a warmer climate. I love my little hermitage and I wish to lay down my bones here. Yea, may it be so! May it be so!"[1]

And the Lord granted Fr. Gerasim to find his final resting place on Spruce Island, even though for the last several years of his life, to his great sorrow, he was unable to live there. After the disastrous earthquake and tidal wave of March 27, 1964, in which he almost lost his life, being in the flood waters up to his neck, Fr. Gerasim's health declined, and in September, 1965, his good friend Gene Sundberg (who has supplied the information that follows in quotes) brought him to Kodiak and took care of him.

1. From a letter to the Russian periodical *Free Word*, 1965, no. 73-4.

In the last year Fr. Gerasim "became so forgetful that the only thought left in his mind was to get to Monk's Lagoon and Father Herman... He then started wandering at night." Since June of this year he was in a Kodiak hospital, where in October he developed double pneumonia. On Sunday, October 12, he received Holy Communion, and in the evening Holy Unction. "Fr. Gerasim requested it and hung on till the last prayer, and when it was finished, just peacefully left us... It was so beautiful, I know I smiled... There was no pain, no strain, no effort."

After the funeral service on October 15, "the sea was rough, but the best captains felt we could make it... After a fairly rough trip we landed at Pestrikoff Beach and began the most exhilarating experience I have ever had.... About a hundred men, women and children made the trek. After a two-hour walk we arrived at the spot he picked for himself 32 years ago, and there he was laid to rest in the place he loved best and near the one he loved best, his Father Herman. Some people said the birds began to sing as if welcoming him back home. Others said there were sweet fragrances, and some even said they felt as though Father Herman was watching us... His burial was somewhat comparable to Father Herman's, in that there weren't enough priests to bury him and so the natives whom he taught and loved carried him to his resting place. The sea was stormy too, but not enough to keep us away.

"Many people since then have said to me, what a shame he couldn't see Father Herman's canonization..."

Indeed, the ways of God are unfathomable. The man who all these years more than anyone else loved and cared for Father Herman, without whom, indeed, the Spruce Island Hermitage would be ruins and the relics perhaps lost -- died on the eve of the Saint's canonization. We may pray God's limitless mercy that Fr. Gerasim is now with his beloved Saint and will participate in the canonization in another world; but it would be unjust to Fr. Gerasim to leave unmentioned the dark project that now threatens Orthodox Alaska, and which, if he had lived to see its realization, would have broken his heart.

Fr. Gerasim suffered literal torments over the crucifixion of Holy Russia by the God-hating Bolsheviks. He witnessed the treason of Soviet-pleasing bishops within Russia -- his own Bishop Evdokim apostacized to the "Living Church," and he saw clearly that "Patriarch Alexy and his loyal friends intercede for the godless power and against our faithful confessors." He suffered terribly over the "Platonites" and others who destroyed Church unity abroad, and was persecuted by them. He knew that "now the times of Antichrist have come." He stood his whole half-century in Alaska for faithfulness to the one canonical Russian Church

Sprnce Island: Funeral procession of Fr. Gerasim, led by Bp. Theodosius of Sitka. The cross is the one planted by Fr. Gerasim 32 years ago on the site of his own grave.

abroad, the Russian Synodal Church. And now on the eve of Father Herman's canonization, the Metropolia announces that it has come to terms with the betrayers of the Church and will accept "autocephaly" from Moscow -- an act that puts an end to all thought of confessing true Orthodoxy, that abandons the persecuted and crucified and forms a union with their oppressors, that outdoes and culminates all the evils of the "Platonites" of yesterday. Fr. Gerasim, now an old warrior, could not have survived this blow.

But Fr. Gerasim's testament remains. Will his voice not be heard now in these critical times? One prays that the whole of Alaska will hear it, beginning with its young bishop who took such care, in difficult circumstances, to bury Fr. Gerasim in his beloved hermitage. The first fruits of Fr. Herman's apostleship was the Aleut Martyr Peter, who was tortured and killed for refusing to abandon Orthodoxy for Roman Catholicism. Would that Orthodox Alaska itself would rise up today as a second Peter to bring forth the fruits of Fr. Gerasim's labors by openly confessing true and canonical Orthodoxy.

Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World

A CLARIFICATION

By the Synod of Bishops of the
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
Concerning the Question of an Autocephalous American Orthodox Church[1]
June 6 (19), 1969

IN ORTHODOX terminology the name *Autocephalous Church* is given to a Church that unites all Orthodox dioceses on a given territory and is headed by a Chief Hierarch chosen by its own episcopate, which is independent of any other Church. Historically autocephaly has been acknowledged for separate Churches satisfying these demands without haste, after their attainment of a certain maturity that leaves no doubts as to their ability firmly to maintain Orthodoxy and independently govern themselves and develop. This acknowledgment should come first from the Mother Church which established the new Local Church and reared it...

The Orthodox population of North America, although it has increased in the past decades, nonetheless comprises a minority and is in large measure scattered. To a significant degere this hinders the formation of a special "American piety" that would unite it in the same way that in another time there was formed a Greek, Russian, Serbian, or Bulgarian piety that sanctified the life of the separate Orthodox peoples. On the contrary, the Americanization of parishes does not usually limit itself to the lawful use of the English language in services and sermons, but goes on to become an influence on the order of Church life by the surrounding un-Orthodox environment. Under such conditions the influence of the Mother Churches with established traditions is a valuable factor for the preservation of Orthodoxy...

As for the Russian dioceses, in general no kind of final decision regarding them can canonically take place until the restoration of normal Church order in Russia. No part of the Russian Church in America can be acknowledged a Local, *i.e.*, Autocephalous Church without the agreement of the Mother Church, and the latter cannot now express itself. The Moscow Patriarchate, as being under the surveillance and direction of the atheist power, cannot be acknowledged as a canonical representa-

1. Excerpts from the full text in *Orthodox Russia*, 1969, no. 12, pp. 5-6. It was issued before the announcement of the Metropolia's "autocephaly" in response to the more general discussion of the issue in the Church press.

tive of the Russian Church. However, out of respect for the suffering of this Church we should not undertake such decisions, which by the canons unconditionally demand her blessing...

THE IMPENDING "AUTOCEPHALY" OF THE RUSSIAN METROPOLIA IN AMERICA

ON THE EVE of the canonization of Father Herman of Alaska, a dark cloud has come over Orthodoxy in America, which was already troubled enough before this. For the third time since the Russian Revolution (first under Metropolitan Platon in the 1920's, then after the infamous Cleveland pseudo-Sobor of 1946) the Russian Metropolia in America has been negotiating for -- and now finally is about to receive -- the "blessing" of the Patriarchate of Moscow for an independent existence. The Metropolia, to quote Metropolitan Ireney's Christmas Epistle of 1969, "becomes, acknowledged by other Orthodox Churches, the Local Church of America, the Father's house and firm refuge for all who confess Orthodoxy and consider the American continent as their earthly fatherland... a single Church for all Orthodox in this land."

Full details and explanations are presumably soon to be forthcoming, but the first announcement of this event leaves an impression so bizarre and incongruous with the real nature of the situation of Orthodoxy and of the Metropolia in America as to require a few comments and raise some burning questions.

The unfitness of the Metropolia to be an autocephalous Church is well set forth in two paragraphs of the recent Decree of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia (Dec. 18-31, 1969):

"The history of the Church knows no precedent of autocephaly being proclaimed on a missionary territory on which at the same time there have continued to exist already for many years dioceses of various autocephalous Churches. The question of the possibility of the formation of an autocephalous American Church is still far from having become ripe for serious discussion also because a genuine pious Christian life exists in America as yet only to the extent that the piety and customs derived from each Church have been preserved. When this heritage is gone, it will be replaced not by a particular local Orthodox piety, but rather by customs adapted from the local non-Orthodox communities, as in many cases is already to be noticed in connection with the order of church services, with fasts, feasts, and the architectural style of churches.

"The only example of sanctity glorified on American soil is Father Herman of Alaska, but he was raised not in American, but in ancient

Russian piety. The incomparably more powerful Church of Russia, which had already been adorned by many examples of sanctity, which was one in jurisdiction and culture on all its territory, showed for the course of almost five hundred years an example of long and humble waiting with the declaration of its autocephaly."

When even the "Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in the Americas," despite its earnest desire for it, cannot agree on any path to establish an "American Orthodox Church," and the last "Pan-Orthodox" conference in Geneva refused even to discuss the issue, the Russian Metropolia suddenly finds *itself* proclaimed the autocephalous American Church. Strange, indeed. A Church possessing a minority of the nominally Orthodox in America, with a chief hierarch who does not speak English, with a sizable minority of the faithful purely Russian, and most of the rest of Russian descent and possessing an unmistakable "immigrant" mentality; a Church whose spiritual poverty is revealed in the fact that it, which claims to be the oldest American "jurisdiction," has no monastery worthy of the name, whose modernizing "theology" is the work of foreigners and is dominated by two recent immigrants (Frs. Schmemann and Meyendorff); a Church whose ecclesiastical immaturity is revealed in its decision to allow each parish to choose its own calendar(!), thus introducing anarchy into its own midst and demonstrating that it places the influence of the local environment above canonical considerations and even above normal church order; *etc.*, *etc.* -- these are the characteristics of an erratic and unmistakably foreign missionary outpost that has suffered from a lack of adequate direction from a well-ordered Mother Church. To call it a Local Orthodox Church is nothing short of ridiculous and can find acceptance only among the ecclesiastically illiterate, or worse, the self-deceived.

Such an incredible announcement must have some other explanation behind the scenes. However, according to the Metropolia's Protopresbyter Joseph Pishtey, who made the first announcement of the impending event in an article in the New York Russian newspaper *Novoye Russkoye Slovo* (Dec. 6, 1969), "everything that we do, we do ecclesiastically, openly... We are not concluding any kind of secret agreement, but openly and straightforwardly speak..." He then proceeds to outline a strange demonstration of the Metropolia's "straightforwardness"-- *six years of secret negotiations*. These include meetings in 1963 between Metropolitan Leonty and a Moscow delegation, early this year between a Metropolia delegation consisting of one bishop and four priests and a Mos-

cow delegation, first in New York, then in Geneva, again in Tokyo (none of the participants of these being named); we are informed that the Great Council of Metropolia bishops met to send this delegation, and again to approve its negotiations -- and all the while, as Protopresbyter George Grabbe points out in his comments on the situation (*Orthodox Russia*, 1969, no. 23, pp. 6-8), "*neither in the newspapers nor in the publications of the Metropolia itself was a single word ever said about this.*"

It is of course no wonder that negotiations are kept secret when they are made with the puppet-hierarchs of the Patriarchate of Moscow, led by Metropolitan Nikodim, who are pointed out not only by those outside the USSR who know the church situation there, but by persecuted believers within the USSR as well, as Soviet agents or, as one of the appeals from Pochaev believers put it, "our red-robed Metropolitans" and "wolves in sheeps' clothing."[1] It is no wonder that negotiations are kept secret when they are undertaken precisely at the time (since 1960) when the persecution of Christians in the USSR (as Soviet sources themselves reveal) has been doubled and redoubled, when the voice of the crushed Orthodox population has been made known in desperate Open Letters sent to the West at the risk of the senders' lives, and when the very hierarchs with whom the Metropolia negotiates are cruelly denying that any persecution exists. The hopes of these believers for help and understanding from outside the Iron Curtain are surely betrayed when they see even free Russian hierarchs come to an agreement with their "wolves." It is no wonder that negotiations are kept secret when people might ask -- in view of the fact that previous negotiations always broke down because the Moscow Patriarchate demanded impossible conditions such as a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet Government -- *what price is the Patriarchate of Moscow demanding for this "favor"?* It is no wonder that, even when the official terms of the agreement are made public, one will have good reason to suspect the existence of secret agreements and clauses that must remain unpublished for the same reason the whole course of negotiations was kept secret.

It has already been revealed that the Metropolia is giving the Japanese Church over to the jurisdiction of Moscow -- which will be extremely useful for the expansion of Soviet political interests and prestige in the Far East. Already in 1946 Metropolitan Theophilus, then still under the Synod of Bishops Outside of Russia, could write (in a letter to Metropolitan Anastassy): "How terribly sad for the Japanese Church,

1. See *The Orthodox Word*, 1965, no. 3, p. 114.

that the Soviet Church might swallow it up, towards which it is striving." It is quite possible that the young and inexperienced Japanese Church may accept this new state of affairs unsuspectingly; but the guilt of the Metropolia will then be all the greater for having handed over her sheep to the wolves, for she is a Russian institution and should well know the essence of the Moscow Church authority. Anyone who doubts that the Patriarchate of Moscow is used by the Soviet Government for its own ends, that the Soviet Government is fully aware of the negotiations with the Metropolia and has *given its approval* for the Metropolia's "autocephaly," that the Soviet Government is interested in Orthodoxy for any other reasons than to further its own interests and to use the Orthodox Church to discredit and destroy itself from within -- is apparently not familiar with the plentiful documents that exist on this subject in English and other languages,[1] including the open statements of the Soviet Government itself.

The whole affair is quite obviously a Soviet "trap," into which the Metropolia has fallen for quite understandable reasons. The Metropolia has always been aware of the uncanonicity of her ecclesiastical position and has sought desperately for the recognition of the mighty and the "official." If Fr. Pishtey states in his article that the Metropolia strives only "to stand on a firm and indisputable canonical foundation," to achieve "peace and canonical clarity," it surely means that the Metropolia until now has been "canonically *un*clear" and has stood on a "*disputable* canonical foundation"! Being insecure in the very foundation of her existence, the Metropolia has been unable to act on the basis of principle. If one adds to this the sense of inferiority inspired by the Metropolia's "immigrant mentality," which leads her to innumerable compromises with the prevailing American secular-Protestant world-view in order to obliterate her own sense of foreignness and "backwardness," one has a situation ripe for the clever diplomats of Moscow to exploit. Can anyone seriously believe that the Metropolia, whose whole spiritual orientation is summed up in the word "compromise," is now about to embark upon a glorious mission of enlightening the American land with the pure teachings and practices of unadulterated, uncompromising Orthodoxy? Nay, the future of the Metropolia was clearly foreseen ten years ago in an Epistle of the Sobor of Russian Bishops Abroad (Oct. 31-Nov. 13, 1959): Her "innovations... and liturgical departures... will eventually draw her into closer affiliation with and gradually lead to her being

1. Such documents appear regularly in English, among other places, in the semi-monthly *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*, 475 Riverside Dr., New York City, 10027.

assimilated by the Protestant world." She will become, in the words of the late Archbishop Vitaly of Jordanville, a kind of "Eastern-rite Anglicanism "

When all is said and done, are the dubious "advantages" the Metropolia derives from her negotiations able to offset their terrible consequences? Let one only reflect: the Metropolia, now possessing "canonical clarity," becomes thereby the patron of the persecution of Christians in the USSR -- for she acknowledges the authority of the hierarchs who support that persecution, and she will hardly dare to deny the official statements of those from whom she received her "canonicity." (One may recall how the Soviet Government effectively silenced the World Council of Churches in 1961 by sending representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate to join it and counteract any voices of protest against its persecution of religion.) The Metropolia hierarchs will not be required to give their declaration of loyalty to the Soviet Government, but they will now be one with a hierarchy that received its own recognition from the Soviet Government by confessing (with Metropolitan Sergy in 1927) that the joys and successes of the Soviet Union were their joys and successes, and its failures their failures -- a confession that finds expression today in the mindless repetition by leading Moscow hierarchs of even the most absurd Soviet propaganda. And upon this Government, which is the ultimate source of the Metropolia's "autocephaly," rests the anathema proclaimed in 1918 by the very Patriarch Tikhon upon whom the Metropolia now tries to lean as having once favored an eventually autocephalous American Orthodox Church.

Thus, finally, for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, do the spiritual alternatives of these times become ever more distinct. The history of the Metropolia itself indicates in which direction she should turn if she truly prefers Orthodoxy and genuine canonicity above the world's recognition. The only time, since her first schism in 1927, when she knew peace and order and "canonical clarity" was when (1936-46) she was an obedient daughter of the entire Russian Church Outside of Russia; the cause of the disorders within Russian Orthodoxy in America--apart from the work of Soviet agents -- has always been first of all the Metropolia herself, with her constant inner uncertainties and changes of mind and allegiance.

It would seem, however, that the period of uncertainty for the Metropolia has ended. She has apparently made her decision, and it is not on the side of peace and order, for now many of her own flock are disturbed and some are leaving her jurisdiction; nor is it in the interests

of American Orthodoxy, which will grow only on the basis of sound and principled Orthodoxy, not shady politics and the world's "recognition"; nor does it help Orthodox unity, for it is a slap in the face of the Russian Church Abroad, whose authority she has twice recognized and twice renounced, and the reaction of the other national jurisdictions in America (in particular the much larger Greek Archdiocese) remains to be seen; nor does its pretense to achieving "canonicity" have any meaning in the Church when this "canonicity" is conferred by the agents of the most determined enemies of the Church.

If this shameful act is indeed consummated, the air will doubtless be filled with the myriad arguments of its apologists; but not one of them will stand up before the conscience of the Church of Christ. Truly, as the recent Epistle of the Synod of Bishops Abroad has expressed it, "on such an agreement the Grace of God cannot repose."

—— *The recent decrees and statements of the Russian Church Outside of Russia on the question of the Metropolia's "autocephaly" will appear in English in the January-February issue of* Orthodox Life, *which may be ordered from Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York, 13361.*

TWO MORE GREEK PRIESTS LEAVE GREEK ARCHDIOCESE FOR RUSSIAN SYNOD

IT IS THROUGH no intention of her own that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has become, in these critical times for world Orthodoxy, a veritable beacon and haven for Orthodox clergy and faithful of all nationalities who strive to learn and preach the truths of Orthodox Christianity in harmony with a fully Orthodox hierarchy. This situation has come about simply through the nature of events. Whole Orthodox Churches are being led by a hundred forms of worldly influence into forgetfulness of Orthodoxy and into outright apostasy; and Orthodox bishops in every Church and jurisdiction are either taking the lead in this suicidal movement or maintaining what has by now surely become a traitorous silence. Scattered voices of monks, clergy, and laymen in many lands are heard pleading for faithfulness to genuine Orthodoxy; but among the hierarchs it is only the bishops of the Russian Church Abroad that speak out in the same spirit, and thus by default of the other bishops have become the champions of Orthodoxy today.

The situation in particular of American Orthodoxy has recently begun to lead increasing numbers of believers to the conclusion that the

other jurisdictions are becoming a lost cause: already well on the way to outright apostasy, they show no signs of a return to genuine Orthodoxy. The last hope of American Orthodoxy has become the Russian Church Outside of Russia. Among Orthodox of Greek background, Abbot Panteleimon and the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston became the first to find refuge in the Russian Church Outside of Russia. Then, in January, 1968, Father Neketas Palassis of Seattle became the first parish priest to leave the Greek Archdiocese over the question of Orthodoxy and enter the Russian Synod; he was followed by several priests and a deacon from the two Syrian jurisdictions and the Russian Metropolia, but although many Greek priests sympathized with Father Neketas none of them has followed him until very recently. In August of this year Father Jeremiah Menios, the young pastor of the Dormition Greek Orthodox Church in Flint, Michigan, became the first to follow Fr. Neketas, giving up his parish to take a job as a draftsman while serving as a part-time assistant to the Russian parish. In a letter to *The Logos* he indicated that he acted as he did because "Iakovos is no longer an Orthodox archbishop" and "those who follow a heretic bishop are his co-workers and guilty of the same heresy." In November he was followed in turn by another young Greek priest, Father Peter Carras of the St. Demetrios Greek Church in Toronto.

Concerning these two priests Fr. Eusebius Stephanou, editor of *The Logos*, himself a none too friendly critic of Archbishop Iakovos who nonetheless remains within the Greek Archdiocese, editorialized thus in his December issue: "It is sad to see the Greek Orthodox Church in America deprived of her most Christ-fearing priests. Others in the clergy may sit back in calculated silence and indifference over the loss of Father Carras to the Archdiocese. But we express grave concern over the decision of a priest whose purity of spirit, priestly dedication, and conscientiousness are well-known in the church.... What is going on? Are we all headed for the Russian Church Outside Russia in order to save our Orthodoxy?"

Fr. Eusebius' own policy remains to try to change the Greek Archdiocese from within; he indicates in the same editorial that if Archbishop Iakovos is a heretic he should be tried and deposed -- by whom? By his model and co-worker in the destruction of Orthodoxy, Patriarch Athenagoras? By the intimidated bishops under them? By a Communist-ecumenist-modernist dominated "Pan-Orthodox" assembly, which by its very composition (*i.e.*, by command of the Moscow Patriarchate) cannot so much as invite the bishops of the most resolutely Orthodox Church

in the world to attend? The best Greek priests, as Fr. Eusebius admits, are simply losing all hope that the Greek Archdiocese can remain, or in fact any longer is, Orthodox.

It is significant, too, that the same Fr. Eusebius who, in an early issue of *The Logos*, gave way to a hasty and uninformed diatribe against "bishops in exile," has since then devoted considerable space to sympathetic statements about the Russian Church Outside of Russia. This would seem to be a sign that the cause today of Orthodox "traditionalism," "awakening," or whatever name one may give to the battle to preserve or regain Orthodoxy, if it has any spark of genuineness in it, must find itself drawn the more surely toward the Russian Church Abroad, the more realistically it comes to look at the rest of contemporary Orthodoxy.

It yet remains to be seen how prophetic will be the headline of Fr. Eusebius' editorial: "Are we all headed for the Russian Synod?" Fr. Eusebius acknowledges that he himself is not ready to make this move--"at least for the present time"; but for how much longer, to the lover of Orthodoxy, will there even seem to be a plausible alternative to this path?

The following text, printed here in full, lays bare better than any comments about it could do, the crisis of conscience that is presently afflicting the best members of the Greek Archdiocese.

FAREWELL SERMON OF REV. PETER CARRAS

(Priest of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Toronto)

NOVEMBER 9, 1969

DEARLY BELOVED in Christ,

Today we have come to celebrate the blessed memory of our father among the Saints, Nectarios, the Wonderworker, to venerate his relic and to beseech him to intercede on our behalf that our Lord keep us in His Kingdom.

We here in the parish of St. Demetrios have seen the Grace which our Lord has bestowed on St. Nectarios and we have come to love him. There was a time when the great Wonderworker was unknown in Toronto. Today our church is filled by those who have come to express their love and respect for this newly revealed luminary. It would, however, be a great mistake to honor St. Nectarios as a wonderworker and to forget the grace which he had as a hierarch of our Church.

St. Nectarios was a shepherd of our Lord's flock and he struggled against the enemies of the Church. His whole life was devoted to preaching the word of God so that the children of God would not be led astray and abandon the way of salvation, the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" of which we are members. He taught that only within the Church can we find our Lord, or as he himself says: "In the Church, the Holy Spirit dwells and abundantly bestows the fruit of Its All-Holy Grace. In the Church, Divine love for God, perfect love and devotion to Him and the unceasing desire for eternal union with God are developed."

Satan, however, does not want to see perfect love and devotion to our Lord and for that reason unceasingly strives to separate us from the Church. The Holy Church of our Lord has been continuously assailed by her enemies in an attempt to drive the children of God away from their heavenly Father. Our Lord, however, has assured us that "the gates of hell" shall not prevail against the Church. The Church will never be vanquished. Of this we are sure. What is not certain, however, is whether we and those who follow after us will remain within the holy ark of salvation. To a large extent the question of whether or not we will be able to withstand those who would separate us from our Lord Jesus Christ, depends on whether or not we are able to recognize the enemy.

This was the task which St. Nectarios assumed. This is the task that we too must undertake if we are to remain faithful to our Lord. A recent maneuver which Satan has used extensively is to convince people that as long as a person believes in a Supreme Power it does not matter whether he belongs to the Church of our Lord or whether he is a Roman Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew or a Hindu. In this way faithful Christians are led to believe that the Grace which they have found in the Kingdom of God exists elsewhere also. Often those who through their own personal disbelief have lost the Grace of God, instead of repenting and striving to obtain the blessing of God, separate themselves from the faith of their fathers and adopt strange doctrines. These people have lost the Grace of God and cannot distinguish between black and white, between the realm of Satan and the Kingdom of God.

This is the position in which many Orthodox Christians find themselves. To make matters worse these people are exposed to so-called Orthodox bishops, priests and theologians who confirm their belief that there is no difference between Satan's realm and the Kingdom of God. All this is done in the name of the Ecumenical Movement.

Lately we have been swamped with various educational materials from the offices of Archbishop Iakovos which attempt to convince us that when we say that we believe "in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" we do not mean the Orthodox Church but all the so-called Christian churches which exist throughout the world. This new doctrine is to be found in statements of the Archbishop, in Sunday School material and in the *Orthodox Observer*, the official publication of the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocese not only teaches that the Orthodox Church is not the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" of our Lord but has set out to show that no differences exist by constantly taking part in "ecumenical worship services." Protests have come from all the Orthodox world but the Greek Archdiocese heeds no one. The wolf has put on the fleece of a sheep and is leading the lambs away from the flock. The shepherd, however, instead of revealing the identity and the danger of the wolf, embraces him and calls him "brother."

At the time of my ordination I knew what policy the Archdiocese was following but I believed that in some way I could combat this attempt to separate us from the Grace of God. I have been your priest for over three years. Together we have struggled to build this church. Together we have endeavored to educate ourselves and our children in the Orthodox faith. Together we have grown in Christ. It is with great sadness that I am forced to tell you that I have taken a step which for many of you will mean that we will be separated. I have come to love you all and I pray that you also love me. It is because I love you all that I must tell you that the man whom we have called our Archbishop is not a shepherd of the Church. He has embarked on a program which will alienate many people from the Church. The doctrine that the Orthodox Church is not the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" of our Lord, is heresy. Those who follow this doctrine have abandoned the faith of our fathers and can no longer be considered Orthodox.

I thank our Lord Who has revealed to me the existence of true shepherds, the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. They have granted me permission to form a parish under the protection of St. Nectarios for the benefit of those Christians in Toronto who do not wish to be part of this attack on the Orthodox Church. I assure you that I will never stop praying that our Lord will guide and protect you and your children.

May God ever enlighten us. Amen.

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH OF STS. THEODORE IN BUFFALO, N. Y.

Readers of The Orthodox Word *are familiar with the background and history of the American Orthodox parish of Sts. Theodore (see issue no. 5 of 1968, pp. 211ff), which entered the jurisdiction of the Russian Church Outside of Russia on Easter Sunday, 1968. The following account is translated from* Orthodox Russia, *1969, no. 21, p. 10 and no. 24, p 11.*

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 (26) of this year, the day of commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, occurred the solemn consecration in pontifical rite of the temple in honor of the Great Martyrs Sts. Theodore of Tyre and Theodore the General in Williamsville, New York, a suburb of Buffalo. The rite was celebrated by the diocesan hierarch, Archbishop Averky, with whom concelebrated Archimandrite Sergy of Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, Mitred Archpriest Aristarch Kotsyubinsky of the local St. Nicholas Russian parish, and the priest of the parish, Archpriest George Lambros, assisted by Archdeacon Pimen and Deacon Alexander Lebedev.

The temple has been quite splendidly established in a building obtained by the parish, next to which there is also a church house. On the iconostasis and on the walls of the church are icons in ancient style, painted by the young Syrian brothers Koufos, students of our monastery iconographer Archimandrite Cyprian who studied for some time at Holy Trinity Seminary at Jordanville. Before the icons a large number of lamps burn, giving a special prayerful atmosphere to the church, which is maintained in ideal cleanness and order. There is a church choir that sings superbly in English to Russian melodies. In everything one senses the fervor and zeal of the parishioners for their church, inspired by their priest himself, who sacrifices himself to serve on a very small salary and therefore works on the side so as not to burden the parish, which is not too numerous and does not have at its disposal large material means.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH OF STS. THEODORE.

Left, the procession around the outside of the church halts before the church doors.

Above, Archbishop Averky blesses the faithful with dikirion and trikirion during the Divine Liturgy.

Archbishop Averky came for the consecration of the temple on Saturday before the All-Night Vigil, accompanied by several brothers from the monastery. With him there came also a number of seminarians who had been preparing in English, under the direction of the seminarian Rasophore-monk John (an American convert), all the church music of the All-Night Vigil and the rite of consecration of a church.

The All-Night Vigil was celebrated virtually in the full monastic rite from 7 to 11 p.m., almost entirely in English. One may say that hardly anywhere else in the world has there been celebrated such a complete service in the English language! The church was filled with the devout, despite such a long service, to which many were unaccustomed. After the Gospel the Archbishop delivered a sermon on the meaning of the impending consecration of the temple, which was immediately translated phrase by phrase into English by one of the subdeacons.

On Sunday morning at 9 a.m. the rite of consecration of the temple was begun. Extraordinary was the influx of a multitude of the devout who came also from other parishes and even from other distant cities. The beautiful sunny weather deepened the joyful attitude of those who participated in the great sacramental event; many were seeing it for the first time in their lives. Very moving was the procession around the church with a particle of the relics of St Basil the Great, as well as the singing of the seminarians, who performed this whole rite with particular enthusiasm in English, so that all would be understandable for the parishioners.

Immediately after this the Divine Liturgy began, at which three choirs sang in turn: the local church choir in English, the choir of seminarians also in English, and the choir of the St. Nicholas Russian Church of Buffalo in Church-Slavonic. Virtually all responses, both by Archbishop Averky and the priests, and the litanies by the deacons, were given in English, and only a few were in Church-Slavonic. It was noteworthy that the local church choir, while singing everything else in English, sang "Lord have mercy" during the litanies in Greek: *Kyrie eleison*. This is because many in the West have found this prayer impossible to translate with all preciseness into the contemporary conversational tongue and thus think it better to leave it untranslated, in the original; thus it sounds better, more prayerful.

At the end of the Liturgy Archbishop Averky congratulated the parishioners on the consecration of their temple; he gave a sermon on the theme that our Orthodox faith is not only an apostolic faith, but also a *patristic* one, and therefore we should understand the Holy Scriptures and interpret them not otherwise than in agreement with the Holy Fathers of the Church, from which we can never step away to satisfy the contemporary "ecumenical" trends, so much in fashion today, for the sake of which there is sacrificed the Orthodox Truth that was brought to earth by the Incarnate Son of God Himself. More important than

anything else in the world is *faithfulness* to this pure and unharmed Divine Truth and the age-old regulations of the Holy Church that are established upon it. Vladika's sermon this time also was translated phrase for phrase into English. Then it seemed that the numerous faithful came up endlessly to kiss the cross with joyful faces, having stood in orderly fashion in the church throughout this whole long service.

After the Liturgy, in the parish dining hall, all participants at the feast and the faithful were invited to a sumptuous repast, at the end of which Archbishop Averky thanked all, beginning with the parish priest, for the zeal that had been manifested and for the ideal organization of the feast, and he expressed the heartfelt wish that the parish might further build its church life in peace and mutual love and agreement, fervently attending the newly-consecrated temple and all Divine services celebrated in it. The parishioners, in their turn, expressed with feeling their thanks to Vladika and all who had come with him for the radiant joy they had brought them.

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, on December 9 (22), Fr. George Lambros and members of the parish paid a return visit to the St. Nicholas Russian Church on the occasion of its parish feast day. On the eve Archbishop Averky, accompanied by several monks from Holy Trinity Monastery, arrived to head the feast. Before the canon at Matins the Archbishop delivered a sermon delineating the marvelous image of the great Wonderworker St. Nicholas, who now for over 1600 years has been sacredly venerated not only by the whole Christian world as a Saint of God and swift helper, an intercessor and defender of all in suffering and difficulties, but even by Moslems and pagans. And suddenly now, in the 20th century of the Christian era, the head of a flock of millions considering themselves right-believing Christians, who brazenly appropriates to himself the title of "infallible Vicar of Christ on earth," Pope of Rome Paul VI, has dared to attempt to shake faith in this most great Saint of God by cutting him out of the list of saints. And the hierarch first in honor of our Eastern Orthodox Church, Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras, openly expresses his solidarity with him by enclosing him in his embrace, kissing him, and entering into close friendship and even communion in prayer with him. The same thing is being done by the Moscow Patriarchate in the person of its representative Metropolitan Nikodim, who not long ago traveled to the Pope in Rome, served in the Russicum (an Institute that is preparing "missionaries" for the conversion of the Russian people to Roman Catholicism), giving communion there

not only to Orthodox, but to Roman Catholics as well, and presented Catholic prelates a precious panagia and cross as gifts. And here in America the "American Metropolia," which broke away from the Russian Church Outside of Russia in 1946 at the Cleveland Sobor, has just publicly admitted that she has always recognized the "Moscow Patriarchate," which is a blind tool of the God-fighting Communist power, as the *canonical* Russian Church, and has been conducting already for some years negotiations with her, now crowned with success, for the reception from her, as "Mother Church," of autocephaly.

It is then no wonder that, when we had just heard about this, in a new calendar Greek church in Florida [in Tarpon Springs beginning on December 4], an icon of St. Nicholas began to weep, about which the American press has already reported and it has been broadcast on the radio. Hundreds of people are flocking to this holy icon in order personally to be convinced of this miracle. A wondrous sign! Does it not testify to the fact that our great Saint of God is weeping over the ever-expanding *apostasy* of the Christian world from Christ and His true Church, which has already seized our Orthodox Church also? What should we do? -- Preserve absolute faithfulness to Christ the Saviour and His true Church, taking no part whatever in this primordial movement of apostasy and in every way avoiding it.

At the end of the Liturgy on the following day Archbishop Averky delivered a sermon on the Gospel theme -- on the words "let us give thanks to the Lord" -- of the necessity of always thanking God for His benefactions, and not only for the good but also for what seems to us evil, for God sends everything to us for our benefit -- to bring us to our senses, for our salvation. We should especially thank God for granting to us such intercessors as St. Nicholas the Wonderworker -- an exalted example for us of true Christian life, inspiring to imitation, especially in the terrible period we are now enduring of universal apostasy, when even in our Orthodox Church there remains only a "little flock" of those faithful to Christ the Saviour But we should not despair or excessively grieve over this, knowing that this was all foretold by the Word of God, and the Lord Himself comforts us, saying: *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom* (St. Luke 12:32). Let us only ourselves not turn out to be in the number of the apostates. This alone do we need to fear!

After the Divine Liturgy a moleben was served to St. Nicholas, and then, in the newly-enlarged parish hall next to the church, there was

a brotherly parish meal. In the organization of this meal an active part was taken by the sisters of our second Buffalo parish of Sts. Theodore.

In his final word Vladika Archbishop Averky thanked all who had organized this radiant festival of prayer and the dinner, and particularly underlined the gratifying manifestation of mutual Christian love and friendly cooperation of these two sister parishes in Buffalo -- one Russian and one American -- which brings to mind the blessed times of early Christianity, when all Christians helped each other, showing brotherly support in all needs.

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THANKS TO the generosity of our subscribers, a large number of copies of *The Orthodox Word* is now sent abroad -- to Alaska, East Africa, Japan, the Near East, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. Most of these lands are Orthodox missionary territories, and it is a significant fact that in our day, when the "Mother Churches" one after the other are falling into open apostasy from Orthodox Truth, the small missionary Churches show signs of battling to preserve their beloved Orthodoxy.

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